

**Sermon: Some Kiss We Want**

**Scripture: John 3**

**Preacher: Rev. Will Burhans**

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There is some kiss we want with our whole lives,  
The touch of spirit on the body.  
Sea-water begs the pearl to break its shell  
And the lily, how passionately it needs some wild darling.  
At night I open the window and ask the moon to come  
and press its face against mine.  
Breath into me.  
Close the language door and open the love window,  
the moon won't use the door only the window.

What both Rumi and Jesus speak of in their poetic and metaphorical ways is what it mean to be in relationship with God; the divine kiss we want at a deep level of our being, to *know* God, and to really know God is less an act of the mind and more an act of the heart, of love, of passion. In the words of Rumi, we must open the window at night and allow the moon to come and press its face against ours. That's what God desires, that kind of intimacy, passion, love with us. God desires to press God's face against ours. And we instead speak of God as judge and king and feel like to please God we must offer our good behavior and morality and achievements! Poor God, who is more a lover passionately needing us as wild darlings and we, fearful of our own passions, are too often act as calculating, bargaining subjects of a sovereign.

The Pharisee named Nicodemus was a devout, educated, faithful man, dutifully and diligently carrying out all his religious and civic duties until he becomes so distracted by this Jesus man he keeps

hearing about that he can't get any sleep. So late one night he does something scandalous for him at least, he sneaks out of his home and goes looking for Jesus; this learned Pharisee running off to learn from this carpenter of Galilee. He wants explanations, answers, clarity. He senses Jesus is a true holy man and he wants to learn from him what the Kingdom of God is truly like. Jesus of course, never one to offer what is expected, says "no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born from above." And the highly educated Nicodemus who has come to Jesus by the language door is confused. "What?" He asks, "we have to enter again into our mothers womb and be born all over?" Jesus must have laughed though the scriptures don't record it. "No, you must be born of water and Spirit this time, born of God's womb, and then you will see the Kingdom of God."

Note that he doesn't say "well, you'll see the kingdom of God when you die and you go to heaven." That's a later interpretation that has been hoisted into the original words of Jesus. No, Jesus says "you are born again and then you see clearly and seeing clearly you see the Kingdom of God all around you." And Nicodemus says flabbergasted and so desirous of this kiss we all want - "How can this be??!!" Jesus chides him a bit for being so obtuse, and then he speaks of love.

He says "Nicodemus, God so loved the world that he gave his only son that those who love him shall know eternal life." Close the language door Nicodemus. It'll only get you so far. Close the language door of your mind and open the love window of your heart. That's how you'll get it. You won't get it up here (point to head). You'll only get it in here (point to heart).

And that could be the missing piece for us... if in fact you are unsure about God and Jesus and what you believe, then likely you are relying too much on your head, which is the pitfall if not the curse of the highly educated. Many of us in the Protestant Mainline tradition have come to think our way out of relationship with God. The enlightenment came and the rule of scientific truth and for many of us Christians it got us too much in our heads to the exclusion of our hearts. It's like if someone asked us to explain why we love our spouse and we begin to analyze them and list out their positive and negative attributes and consider our history with them and the good things and the less than good things they've ever said or done and analyzed the reasons why and began to poll others about their analysis of our spouse.... and in the midst of it forgot to go on dates and make love and before we know it the relationship is analyzed to death, because the truth of our love for the other runs in a deeper current than the mere facts of it, that the truth is something bigger and deeper than the facts when it comes to relationship. I wonder if that's what's lost in liberal Protestantism, the heart, the passion, the wild darling. Ask the youth or Ben or Dave Weir about the Philly Project and the evangelicals down there. How does their relationship with God look? Is it an intellectual exercise? No way. It's love man! Doesn't mean they don't think about their faith too but its first and foremost about the love relationship with God, with Jesus. I'm afraid many of us liberal Christians have thought our way out of that love, been turned off by the emotionality of it all, or something....

And if so then how do we reclaim that love? For one we need to simply close the language door, be reborn, and learn how to speak to God all over again, particularly our love language. This is what we did at

the silent retreat this past Spring and what we do in Centering Prayer and Meditation, we close the language door even if for 20 minutes and try better to open the love window for God to come and press Her face against ours. We've been trained so hard to go with the intellect that we need to close it off at times. Not being blind in our faith but rather prioritizing LOVE.

Another way to open the love window is at times to stop analyzing social issues and whether the government should be handling them or not and just find ways to love and help those who are on the underside of all our privilege. Because loving God will inevitably lead us to loving others and vice versa, the act of loving others will increase our love for God and especially when we work to love those we don't already love or even like, we'll very quickly get a sense of what it means to depend on God to love through us. And then we will see the kingdom of God, then we will know what it means to be born again for the second time, to know God in love, to hear God's call to us intimately and personally. Then the only question will be – will we follow:

## I Hear A Call

D  
I hear a call now will I answer  
                  G                  D  
Forsake my own to serve another.  
                  G                  Bm  G  
Though darkness falls, stay a believer.  
                  D  G          A  D  
I hear a call now will I answer.

D  
I see a light, now will I follow  
                  G                  D  
Fill up this life that grows more hollow  
                  G                  Bm  G  
Make joy reside where there lives sorrow.  
                  D  G          A  D  
I see a light now will I follow

                  G                  D  
\* I hear a call from out of nowhere  
                  G                  A  
And from everywhere I go  
                  D  G          A  D  
I hear a call now will I answer.

                  D  
I feel a touch now will I hold on  
                  G                  D  
Be there with love for those with no one.  
                  G                  Bm  G  
With kindness such it lives though I'm gone  
                  D  G          A  D  
I feel a touch now will I hold on.

\* I hear a call from out of nowhere  
                  G                  A  
And from everywhere I go...  
                  D  G          A  D  
I feel a touch now will I hold on.  
I see a light now will I follow.  
I hear a call now will I answer.